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ABSTRACT

Six basic considerations in teaching literature to gifted children in grades four through six are presented in the first half of this curriculum guide: (1) The teacher needs a broad knowledge of literature, as well as a sensitivity to students, in order to recommend literature for each child. (2) The teacher's method of presentation is important. (3) The reading preferences of the child should be honored. (4) The interrelationship of content and skills must be recognized. (5) The gifted child should be encouraged to develop higher intellectual skills such as evaluation, critical and creative thinking, recognition of implication, development of hypotheses, and comparison and contrast. (6) Varied types of literature should be suggested by the teacher. The second half of the curriculum guide offers four sample units with suggested activities and readings given for each unit. The units are entitled: "Conformity and Rebellious Behavior," "Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature," "A Study of the Works of One Author," and "Use of Historical Fiction." The two appendixes offer a sample comprehensive literature unit and a suggested literature/language arts curriculum for academically gifted students. (JF)

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Teaching Gifted Children Literature in Grades Four Through Six

Prepared under the direction of
Gifted and Talented Education Management Team
California State Department of Education

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FOREWORD

A primary goal of California public schools is to provide equal opportunity for *all* pupils to become proficient in intellectual skills and knowledgeable in the basic subjects. In our efforts to achieve this goal, we must provide programs that are of sufficient scope and depth to permit each child to learn at his or her own rate and to the full level of his or her ability.

Gifted pupils, as a group, have unique educational needs, many of which we can meet only by providing for a high degree of flexibility in their educational programs. Several years ago the Department of Education directed and coordinated a federally funded project for the development of curriculum materials of the type needed for such programs. The 1972 edition of this curriculum guide was a product of those efforts. I am pleased that the Department now has the opportunity to help further the educational opportunities for the gifted by publishing this 1978 edition, *Teaching Gifted Children Literature in Grades Four Through Six*. I am confident that this updated publication will prove to be as valuable as its predecessor in our efforts to help gifted children realize their full potential.

Superintendent of Public Instruction

PREFACE

This curriculum guide, which was planned and completed originally in 1972 as part of a project under provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title V, was updated this year as part of a Public Law 93-380, Section 404, project, Development of Teaching Competencies–Gifted and Talented Education. The guide is intended for use by the teachers of students whose general mental ability places them in the top 2 percent of all boys and girls.

Teaching Gifted Children Literature in Grades Four Through Six is one of a series of curriculum guides for use by teachers of mentally gifted students. The 1972 edition of the guide was written by Thomas Clifford, Visalia Unified School District. He prepared the guide under the direction of John C. Gowan, Professor of Education, and his assistant, Joyce Sonntag, Assistant Professor of Education, both of San Fernando Valley State College (now California State University, Northridge). The guide was updated by Carole Laidlaw, Capistrano Unified School District, under the direction of Paul D. Plowman, Consultant, Gifted and Talented Education Management Team; and Director, Development of Teaching Competencies–Gifted and Talented Education project.

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Publications Available from the California State Department of Education

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Curriculum Guide for Teaching Gifted Children Literature in Grades One Through Three (1977)*

Teaching Gifted Children Literature in Grades Four Through Six (1978)**

Teaching Gifted Students Literature in Grades Seven Through Nine (1978)***

Curriculum Guide for Teaching Gifted Children Science in Grades One Through Three (1977)*

Curriculum Guide for Teaching Gifted Children Science in Grades Four Through Six (1977)*

Curriculum Guide for Teaching Gifted Children Social Sciences in Grades One Through Three (1977)*

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CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	iii
Preface	v
Part I Basic Considerations	1
Knowledge of Literature	1
Method of Presentation	2
Preferences of the Gifted Child	3
Interrelationship of Content and Skills	3
Higher Intellectual Skills	4
A Possible Continuum for Grades Four Through Six	5
Part II Sample Units	9
Sample Unit 1—Conformity and Rebellious Behavior	9
Sample Unit 2—Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature	11
Sample Unit 3—A Study of the Works of One Author	13
Sample Unit 4—Use of Historical Fiction	15
Appendix A Sample Comprehensive Literature Unit	19
Appendix B Suggested Literature/Language Arts Curriculum for Mentally Gifted Minors	25
Suggested Teaching Materials	27

PART II

Basic Considerations

Gifted children read children's literature; they also read adult literature and frequently explore a subject far beyond what is available in children's literature. Because adult literature often has concepts and nuances that the child does not comprehend fully, his or her perception may not be that which the adult perceives. The teacher must be sensitive enough to travel the same ideological path the child takes in his or her exploration. Developing the child's understanding and freeing him or her to make his or her own interpretation of a literary work increase his or her evaluative growth beyond the scope of the teacher's interpretation.

Knowledge of Literature

Unless the district has a blanket policy of testing all children in the first grade, the child identified as gifted this early has demonstrated a high verbal ability in reading. He or she usually comes to the study of literature with a good ability in reading. For those, however, who do not have good reading ability, minor changes in individual lesson assignments must be made to meet the level of his or her attainment. It is possible that basic understandings of literature have been introduced in the primary grades

Nonfiction

The gifted child who is curious will have begun reading nonfiction by the time he or she enters fourth grade. He or she will have read biographies and perhaps will have read deeply in many subjects. It is easy to misinterpret his or her interest in nonfiction and expect that his or her understanding of literature extends to knowledge beyond the realms of the book. This misinterpretation is not likely to occur, however, if the teacher keeps in mind that at this age level the gifted generally divide themselves into three groups. One group reads extensively in one area. A second group reads extensively but in many different areas. A third group may not yet read well enough to have embraced the world of excitement in literature. The teacher who is sensitive to these differences will develop a different kind of

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program for each. If the child's interest is captured, his or her teacher will make available some related volumes for his or her use.

Fiction

When the gifted child has read fiction, he or she has frequently read a series of books like the Oz stories, the Nancy Drew stories, and the stories of the Hardy Boys. Unfortunately, these stories sometimes do not meet with the approval of classroom teachers (or parents), and these adults may actually try to discourage his or her reading. It must be kept in mind that these books fill the child's need for fiction and are instrumental in his or her development of love for reading. This interest can often serve as a foundation for later study of literature.

Book Selection

Where does love of literature begin? A child who reads nonfiction is informed of new facts or gains further understanding even though the material may be difficult and partly obscure. In fiction, however, he or she asks primarily that the material be exciting or interesting. The study of literature can begin with either nonfiction or fiction. The skillful teacher will lead the child to select a book that meets the child's objectives and that is suitable to the objectives of the teacher.

Method of Presentation

The teacher's method of presentation is as important as the material presented. The gifted child at this grade level requires, along with special material, improved forms of presentation. Specific characteristics that make the child especially receptive to improved forms of presentation are the following:

- He or she is apt to have a deeper interest in one or more topics.
- He or she can work on his or her own for longer periods of time.
- He or she has various levels of intellectual ability.

From these generalizations it follows that teaching procedures for developing individual differences must be fully utilized.

For the purpose of good classroom management, the teacher must work with the full class at times. He or she should, however, occasionally establish small groups in which interaction takes place between pupils and between teacher and pupil.

Individual work directed toward a pupil's unique ability may be assigned in the same manner as individual reading is assigned. Brief individual conferences help to ascertain progress and to encourage independent work, providing an opportunity for a child who does

not feel secure in large-group discussions to develop feelings of adequacy about his or her progress. The planning of future assignments can be handled similarly and should be based on what the child needs and where the teacher finds him or her in his or her progress.

Preferences of the Gifted Child

The gifted child readily accepts literature that is entertaining or interesting. He or she may ignore new words whose meanings he or she does not know in his or her attempts to read material that has strong appeal. Plot is important to the child. For example, the simplicity of a fairy tale may not meet the complexity that the gifted child is capable of accepting; but if other elements are complex, the child will overlook the lack of complexity in plot. Fairy tales or fantasies that have a higher level of complexity are Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*, Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*, and Jane Langdon's *Diamond in the Window*.

The plot structure and the events that make up the story must be worthy of the child's interest and must unfold within his or her span of attention. Although, because of his or her immaturity the child may not be capable of understanding the deeper concepts a writer may include in poetry or adult literature, he or she will, nevertheless, obtain a general awareness of the information that he or she will integrate at his or her own level.

The gifted child is usually interested in a particular field and is apt to become ingrossed in a specific type of fiction. Although parents and teachers may believe that the child should expand his or her interest into other areas, they should not impose value judgments on the child and interfere with his or her selection of recreational reading. If the subject matter is well presented, one can assume that the child's interest will change when satisfied and that the demands of his or her own intellect will prevail. No one should attempt to guess what parameters a gifted youngster draws from his or her reading.

Interrelationship of Content and Skills

Each area of literature offers opportunities to relate subject-area skills to subject content. Reading skills have primary importance. Structural analysis is usually taught in language usage, but the gifted child should be tested to find out whether he or she has begun the study of literature with a good ability in phonetic analysis. If not, individual work should be provided. A review of phonetic analysis can accompany the study of mythology, in which children need to pronounce correctly the Greek names used in discussions.

Listening skills should be continually explored. Skill at oral reading or dramatic reading should be related to material of shorter length in each area. Dramatics should not be left solely to the literature of drama; it may be adapted to poetry for choral readings. Or a biography can be presented in dramatic form if speech skills are lacking.

Library skills should be taught with other matters. The teacher should not teach these skills separately unless a particular gifted child prefers it to another unit. Library skills are developed by the use of assignments that require the use of the library for their completion.

Outlining is effectively taught in other subject areas as well as in literature, but its application in literature develops higher intellectual skills through practice in the organization of material. The need for a casual reading of a literary work is real, and this need should be zealously provided for by the teacher. Casual reading does not, however, reflect organization; therefore, outlining will help gifted children to organize the material they have read.

Higher Intellectual Skills

The higher intellectual skills to be developed by the gifted child in his or her study of literature are as follows:

1. *Evaluation* (independent thinking). The teacher should present opportunities for the child to examine and analyze material on his or her own and to arrive independently at stated conclusions. The teacher can then review and discuss the adequacies or alternative conclusions with the pupil.
2. *Divergent production*
   a. *Critical thinking.* The teacher should provide opportunities to solve problems requiring new and improved methods of action. The interpretation of a character's motivation or the consideration of alternative courses of action for a character to follow are problems that the child can attempt to solve.
   b. *Creative thinking.* Creative potential can grow only in a positive, accepting atmosphere. Ample free time to complete tasks is necessary; time for incubation is essential.
3. *Recognition of implication* (original work). Writing to create a form of literature and to evaluate a work are exercises requiring ability to recognize implications.
4. *Development of hypotheses* (inquiry). The skills of inquiry can be developed through the use of questions about literature that yield productive answers. Hypothesizing can be taught along with the skill of testing a hypothesis about what the child reads. Before giving an assignment, the teacher may wish to present

leading questions, such as "Why does the writer set this story in this particular city?" or "What actions led to the decision that the boy made?"

5. *Comparison and contrast.* One reason for presenting the great themes of literature is to use literary material for the development of skills underlying the making of comparisons.
   a. The kinds of comparisons to be made include (1) the comparison of a literary work with a similar model of excellence; and (2) the comparison of one type of literary work with another. The latter should be emphasized until the time comes when the child has had sufficient experience in literature to establish his or her own criteria for models of excellence. One is not able to keep from making comparisons, but one must learn to separate opinion from an analysis of facts. It is difficult to teach the skills of comparison and contrast so that the child can use them constructively to reach valid conclusions.
   b. Judgment and comparison and contrast are based on comparisons with the ideal. Before he or she can learn to make valid judgments about the worth of a literary work, the pupil must have read much. At the same time, his or her reading must have been done in a free academic environment in which his or her opinions and early evaluative attempts were accepted before being clarified. Judgment should be a part of each unit and should be developed at the conclusion of the study of similar material.
   c. For the child who works out evaluations over longer periods of time, the solving of problems must take place during a relaxed assignment period. If this situation exists, the conscientious gifted child will not begin to associate evaluation and personal judgment with anxiety and thus avoid future involvement.
   d. Oral discussion should be reflective. The teacher should encourage both slow and rapid responses. The purpose of oral discussion is not to test recall; it is to give the gifted child a chance to use and develop his or her higher intellectual skills.

A Possible Continuum for Grades Four Through Six

The following is a possible continuum for grades four through six.

Fourth Grade

Folktales and mythology are favorites at the fourth-grade level. Because fairy tales are already well known to pupils entering the

fourth grade, a unit of comparison and contrast can be conducted with folktales, such as those of the California Indian, Mexican folktales, and Spanish folktales. This study can be integrated with units on the social sciences. Greek mythology can be used to introduce the concept of heroes and heroines, and a comparison of mythology with fairy tales can be made.

The hero and heroine concept can be followed up with a unit on biographies. Simple biographies of familiar persons will intrigue a few gifted pupils. Another unit can consist of tracing concepts through various types of literature. Some teachers may wish to emphasize one type of literature instead of several. The major concepts and their relationships within the universality of literature should be defined.

In the fourth grade poetry is best studied as a follow-up to the subject-matter content presented in the primary grades. More emphasis can be given to listening skills, speaking skills, and imagery. Generally speaking, the study of the mechanics of poetry is best limited to simple rhymed or unrhymed poetry and simple imagery.

Fifth Grade

Folktales and biography are well accepted in grade five and remain preferred reading for many imaginative gifted children. The study of biographies can be expanded by the inclusion of books about American presidents. Students can compare and contrast the time when each president lived, the crises each encountered, and the methods each used to resolve the crises. The study of American presidents nationalizes and personalizes the hero and heroine concept.

When based on historical representation, drama is an exciting follow-up project for fifth graders. It gives opportunities to present the essential elements previously discussed and brings boys and girls together for some communication at a time when they are entering a period of extreme self-consciousness.

Sixth Grade

Mythology may be given primary emphasis. The curriculum should encompass the study of words, including word origins; the history and culture of Greece; and the reading of the mythologies of other countries. Comparison and contrast are important to an appreciation of one's literary heritage. The teacher who is interested may want to examine translated Greek lyrics and trace the relations between them and myths. The lyrics in *Greek Lyrics,* translated by Richmond Lattimore, are exquisitely simple and offer high-level imagery.

Biography can include contemporaries and lesser-known Americans, as well as explorers, scientists, and religious leaders. Other kinds

of literature should be taught, and it is probably more urgent now than in the two previous grades to give students free time that is nonstructured so that they can individualize their own study of literature. Of course, the elements of the narrative form can be given more emphasis than in the earlier grades.

Theme and purpose may now be emphasized in poetry. Details of poetic construction might also interest a few children. The poetry of America and England can be contrasted with the poetry of Mexico and Spain. The poetic prose of Juan Ramon Jimenez and his biography are suitable for such an approach.

PART III

Sample Units

Gifted children in grades four through six should be helped to refine their critical thinking, recognize and use creative processes, acknowledge and accept the richness of variety in the human experience, and acquire a lifelong love for literature.

Not all gifted children in grades four through six will be familiar with the various concepts involved in a literature study. Some pupils will be able to recall little from their work in grades one through three. For review purposes and/or to familiarize the pupils with such concepts as theme, character development, setting, and point of view, it is suggested that teachers refer to *Curriculum Guide for Teaching Gifted Children Literature in Grades One Through Three* (Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1977).

Part II of this publication contains four *sample* literature units. Each unit is designed so that it could be used with entire classes; with small groups of pupils; or, with modifications, in an indivialized reading program. Regardless of the situation, however, it is important that teachers provide to their pupils opportunities to participate in small-group discussions; such discussions offer the best opportunities for teachers to assist the pupils in the areas of critical thinking and communications skills.

Each sample unit is based on a major concept, or theme; and each includes (1) a list of suggested activities related to the specific work or works being considered; (2) some suggestions for additional activities; and (3) some suggestions with regard to books and authors whose books could be used in the conduct of the unit. The skills involved in the suggested activities are in the affective and cognitive domains.

Sample Unit 1
Conformity and Rebellious Behavior

Conformity and rebellious behavior are topics in which gifted children are generally very interested. The sample unit on conformity and rebellious behavior is based on Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*, the main characters of which are themselves gifted youngsters with special abilities and problems.

The Major Concept

The major concept of this unit is that each person must decide how he or she can "be true to himself or herself" and still maintain a place among his or her peers. The pupils should come to understand that many great men and women have had to confront the problems of society's demands for conformity.

Activities

After completion of *A Wrinkle in Time,* teachers could have the pupils do the following:

- List the famous writers, philosophers, and artists mentioned in the book.
- Select one of the famous persons mentioned in the book, and do research work on his or her life. The pupils could share their new knowledge in some way with the rest of the class. They could, for example, pretend to be the person for the entire day (a costume might be appropriate); conduct a mock interview with the person; give a slide presentation, or make a tape for use in the listening center; or show a film to the class.
- After they have heard about the lives of other famous individuals, participate in a class discussion in which they compare the lives, problems, and contributions of the people. How did each handle the problem of conformity? Which of the subjects were aided in difficult times by a special person?
- Select a famous living person whom the author might have chosen to include in her book. Why might the author have selected this person? (This activity could lead to a study of the biographies of famous contemporary persons.) Why are so few women mentioned?
- Discuss the pressures that bear on children their age. How can youngsters meet the pressures that their parents, peers, teachers, and society in general impose upon them and still maintain their own beliefs?
- Participate in an activity in which everyone must do the same things in the same way for a specified period of time. Afterward, the children can discuss their feelings about such conformity.

Supplementary Activities

In addition to the activities already mentioned, teachers could have the pupils do the following:

- Dramatize favorite sections of the book; design small-scale stage settings.

- Select music that is appropriate for the children's ride through space.
- Debate the statement, "This book needs illustrations."
- Complete the following statement: "If a film were to be made of this book . . . ."

Instructional Materials

The following books are recommended for use in the unit on conformity and rebellious behavior:

1. *Abel's Island,* by William Steig
2. *Along Came a Dog,* by Meindert De Jong
3. *Master Puppeteer,* by Katherine Paterson
4. *Summer of the Swans,* by Betsy Byars
5. *A Wrinkle in Time,* by Madeleine L' Engle

Sample Unit 2
Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature

Gifted children in general have very strong feelings about science fiction and fantasy literature. While some are extremely enthusiastic about these types of works, others consider them to be a waste of time. To stimulate those in the latter category toward enjoyment of science fiction and fantasy books, teachers should provide a wide variety of works from which they might choose. Discussions about popular science fiction and fantasy-type films and television shows may be the best way to get the less enthusiastic children "turned on" to science fiction and fantasy.

The Major Concept

The major concept of this unit is that there are no new story lines or themes—only new characters and new locations. The writer of science fiction and fantasy uses imaginative ways to pose old problems in new places.

Activities

After the children have read selections in the area of science fiction and/or fantasy, the teacher can have them do the following:

- List the major problems or conflicts in the story just read.
- Discuss how the problems, solutions, or outcomes differed from story to story.
- Compare the theme or major problem in one book with the theme or major problem in another. Identify and discuss the "special" forces or methods that were available to the characters in a story but that are unavailable to persons in real-life situations.

- Compare the ways in which science fiction writers solve story problems with the methods used by writers of fantasy stories.
- Select a favorite passage from a book, and share it with the class.
- Identify the elements of human behavior that are the same in both science fiction and fantasy stories. Why do authors have their characters behave in such human ways? Why do some of the most "mechanical" characters still act as humans?

Supplementary Activities

In addition to the activities already mentioned, teachers could have the pupils do the following:

- Write an original paragraph about any of the following for a science fiction or fantasy story: (1) a character who has unusual powers or physical characteristics; (2) a setting or location; (3) a vehicle or machine; (4) a new form of communication (teachers may wish to read Ray Bradbury's description of how Martians read in his *Martian Chronicles*); (5) a different dimension of time or space; or (6) a problem or conflict in the future.
- Discuss the statement, "Many ideas of the early science fiction writers have become reality."
- Make a list of some early science fiction writers, their ideas about the future, and those that have become reality.
- Discuss the following: "Science fiction writers are the prophets of the future."
- Compare the basic elements and styles of science fiction and fantasy stories.
- Create a work of science fiction or fantasy, possibly in one of the following forms: an animated Super 8 film, videotape pilot for a television series, filmstrip, radio script, or comic-strip series.
- Discuss why the movie *Star Wars,* television's "Star Trek," or some other current film or program is so popular.
- Discuss which authors use contemporary settings as background for supernatural events. Are their stories preferable to those whose stories are set in the future? Why or why not?

Instructional Materials

The works of the following authors are recommended for use in the unit on science fiction and fantasy stories:

1. Lloyd Alexander
2. Ray Bradbury
3. John Christopher

4. Ursula Le Guin
5. C. S. Lewis
6. Ann McCaffrey
7. Patricia McKillip, especially *Riddle Master of Hed*
8. Andre Norton
9. J. R. R. Tolkien

Sample Unit 3
A Study of the Works of One Author

An examination of the works of one author can be an interesting way for gifted pupils to study literary styles and themes. The school library and the neighborhood public library may be the best sources of materials. Librarians can generally provide information to teachers about new works by well-known writers of children's literature.

This sample unit on the works of one author is based on the books of Theodore Taylor, with special emphasis on *The Cay*. This book was selected as the focal point of the unit because of its strong appeal to youngsters and because of its availability in paperback. In a unit of this type, pupils should read as many of the author's works as possible, including his or her best-known work.

The Major Theme

Reading and studying several works by the same author will help the pupils to understand better the author's point of view and his or her literary style. Research into the author's background and attitudes will also help them understand better each of the author's works.

Activities

After the children have read several of Theodore Taylor's works, the teacher can have them do the following:

- From one of the author's works, select a statement or incident that reveals something about the author's view of life (how people behave, for example).
- Find in another of the author's works a statement similar to the one selected for the activity above. Statements that the author has made in an interview or that appear on a book jacket might also be used.
- Compare the themes of two of Theodore Taylor's books, and determine whether or not the two lend support to the point of view he expresses in *The Cay*.
- Debate the following statement: "One who does not know anything about the author's life, background, or point of view can enjoy a particular work by the author as much as someone who does know something about the author."

- Discuss this statement: "An author's point of view about life will be the same in all of his or her books."
- Compare the style and themes of Theodore Taylor with those of any of the following authors: Clyde Bulla, Roald Dahl, Madeleine L'Engle, Scott O'Dell, or Laura Ingalls Wilder.

Supplementary Activities

The following supplementary activities are appropriate for this unit:

- Share with the class the book *The Pied Pipers,* which includes interviews with some of the best-known authors of children's books.
- Encourage the pupils to write to contemporary authors; some may be living in the area and might come to meet with the class.
- Some pupils may wish to write, illustrate, and bind their own original stories. Celebrate the event with an author's tea, during which parents, teachers, and pupils can enjoy works.
- Consider conducting a miniunit on "Careers in Literature." Invite to class not only people who write or illustrate books but also people who edit, bind, publish, print, or sell books.
- Continue to have the children share their original books by having them read them to other classes or display them in the school or neighborhood library.
- Let the local librarian know that the children could write "reviews" of new library books.
- If the class is writing a newspaper, be sure to include a book review section. Conduct a minilesson on the difference between the standard, sometimes boring "book report" and the more intriguing book "review." Use copies of current book reviews from magazines or from the Sunday supplement of the newspaper.
- Some pupils may be interested in studying the works of such masters as Dickens, Bronte, or Shakespeare. Assist them in finding works that are *not* poorly written, watered-down versions.

Instructional Materials

The following authors and their works would be appropriate for study in this unit:

1. Clyde Bulla
2. Susan Cooper, especially *The Dark Is Rising*
3. Roald Dahl, especially *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory; Charlie and the Glass Elevator; Danny: The Champion of the*

World; James and the Giant Peach; Magic Finger; and *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar and Six More*

4. Marguerite De Angeli
5. Adrienne Jones
6. Madeleine L'Engle
7. Penelope Lively
8. Scott O'Dell, especially *The Black Pearl, The Island of the Blue Dolphins, King's Fifth, The 290,* and *Zia*
9. Elizabeth Speare
10. Laura Ingalls Wilder
11. Justin Wintle and Emma Fisher's *The Pied Pipers*
12. Maia Wojciechowska, especially *Shadow of a Bull*

Sample Unit 4
Use of Historical Fiction

Works of historical fiction can be used to great advantage in the social science and humanities programs for gifted pupils in grades four through six. In short, historical fiction is, for many pupils, an exciting and enjoyable way of looking at the past.

The Major Theme

The major theme of the unit on historical fiction is that people of all cultures share similar problems and concerns.

Activities

After the pupils have read a work of historical fiction, the teacher can have them do the following:

- List the following information from the book that was read: (1) the inclusive dates of the action of the story; (2) the setting (geographical area) of the story; (3) the major events of historical significance that were mentioned; and (4) the names of famous people in the story.
- Design a timeline that shows other major events that occurred at the same time as the action of the story.
- Discuss the effect that the major historical events in the story had on the major character or characters.
- Conduct a mock interview with a major character from the book. The pupils should be sure to discuss the principal problems of the time.
- Discuss the following statement: "The writer of historical fiction is just as important as the historian who writes history books."

- Debate the following statement: "Historical fiction is an easy way to learn about the past."
- Describe the special techniques that the author used to make the past "come alive."
- Discuss the types of experiences that the author must have had or the research that he or she must have had to do to be able to write the book.

Supplementary Activities

In addition to the activities already mentioned, the teacher could have the pupils explore career possibilities in the fields of writing, publishing, printing, and illustration. In their career exploration pupils could do the following:

- Interview a local author. What skills, experiences, interests, and educational opportunities were important in his or her becoming a writer?
- Talk with the owner of a bookstore. What are the pleasures of owning such a store? What are the problems?
- Interview an author/illustrator. Does one have an advantage in being able to illustrate his or her own work? What is it like to illustrate someone else's work? When illustrating someone else's work, does he or she ever feel the urge to change the story?
- Ask an editor why even the best of writers need an editor. What is the opinion of an author on this matter?
- Study the arts of bookbinding and printing. What are the special skills needed in each?
- Examine the role of an agent. Can an author get a book published on his or her own? How does an agent help?
- Invite a local book reviewer to class. What effect do book reviews have on the success or failure of a book?
- List as many careers as possible that are related to writing. (The teacher may have to remind the pupils about such occupations as typesetter, artist, and copywriter.)

A natural culminating activity is the creation and presentation of original books by the pupils. An excellent way of sharing the children's works is to give a tea to which parents, pupils, and other staff members are invited to examine the stories. Afterward, the books may be donated to the school library or shared with children in other classes. Exceptional works might be sent to a publisher for consideration.

Instructional Materials

The following authors and their works would be appropriate for study in this unit. Areas of specialization are included in parentheses.

1. Hester Burton (English history)
2. Marguerite De Angeli (Middle Ages), *The Door in the Wall: Story of Medieval London*
3. Jean Fritz (American history), especially *And Then What Happened to Paul Revere?*
4. Irene Hunt (American history), *Across Five Aprils*
5. Scott O'Dell (California history)
6. Leo Politi (California history)
7. Theodore Taylor (California history), *The Maldonado Miracle*
8. Leonard Wibberly (American history)

APPENDIX A

Sample Comprehensive Literature Unit

The following is a sample comprehensive literature unit on the world and works of Maurice Sendak, reprinted, with minor editorial changes, from *Gifted V*, a curriculum handbook published by the Orange County Council for Gifted Education (1976).

This is an integrated unit for gifted children combining literature, the art of illustration, music, research skills, careers, and self-concept.

The approach will be through the study of the works of Maurice Sendak, and the concepts listed are only "starters." The structure may be applied to the works of A. A. Milne, Beatrix Potter, Brian Wildsmith, and others. The unit is intended to allow for "Spin-offs" in related areas. Suggested activities are suggestions only, and children should be allowed to select one or more of them or to design a project of their own.

Books for the Unit:

1. *Where the Wild Things Are,* Maurice Sendak. Harper & Row
2. *Hector Protector* and *As I Went Over the Water,* Maurice Sendak. Harper & Row
3. *In the Night Kitchen,* Maurice Sendak. Harper & Row
4. *Higglety, Pigglety, Pop!,* Maurice Sendak. Harper & Row
5. *King Grisley-Beard,* Grimm. Farrar, Straus & Giroux
6. *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present,* Charlotte Zolotow. Harper & Row
7. *The Sign on Rosie's Door,* Maurice Sendak. Harper & Row
8. *Sarah's Room,* Doris Orgel. Harper & Row
9. *Little Bear,* Else Holmelund Minarik. Harper & Row
10. *A Kiss for Little Bear,* Else Holmelund Minarik. Harper & Row
11. *Little Bear's Visit,* Else Holmelund Minarik. Harper & Row
12. *Zlateh the Goat,* Isaac Bashevis Singer. Harper & Row
13. *I Want to Paint My Bathroom Blue,* Ruth Krauss. Harper & Row
14. *Seven Tales,* H. C. Andersen. Harper & Row
15. *Lullabies and Night Songs,* music by Alec Wilder. Harper & Row
16. *The Juniper Tree,* Grimm. Farrar, Straus & Giroux
17. *Pierre,* Maurice Sendak. Harper & Row
18. *One Was Johnny,* Maurice Sendak. Harper & Row
19. *Alligators All Around,* Maurice Sendak. Harper & Row
20. *Chicken Soup with Rice,* Maurice Sendak. Harper & Row
21. *The Light Princess,* George MacDonald. T. Y. Crowell

22. *The Golden Key*, George MacDonald. Dell
23. *The Animal Family*, Randall Jarrell. Pantheon
24. *A Hole Is to Dig*, Ruth Krauss. Harper & Row
25. *Kenny's Window*, Maurice Sendak. Harper & Row

Related Books and Materials:

1. *Books Are by People*, Lee Bennett Hopkins, Scholastic Book Services. Brief biographies of famous children' authors.
2. *World Book Encyclopedia*, section on children's literature. Reprints are available on this article, which deals with Caldecott and Newbery award winners.
3. *People Magazine*, March, 1976. Good article with photos and sketches on Sendak.
4. *Time Magazine*, December 10, 1973. Excellent article on Sendak and his work.
5. *The Pied Pipers*, Justin Wintle and Emma Fisher. Paddington Press, Ltd., 1974.
6. *All Mirrors Are Magic Mirrors*, Welleran Paltarnees. Green Tiger Press, 1972.

Films:

1. *Creating a Children's Book*–Orange County Film Library
2. *Zlateh the Goat*

Music

1. Bowmar #97–Pictures at an Exhibition
   #77–Scheherazade
   #69–Music of the Dance
   #70–Fairy Tales in Music
   #80–Fantasy in Music
2. Carole King's album, "Really Rosie"–soundtrack from TV show

Filmstrips:

1. Schloat–Prentice-Hall, *Little Adventures in Art* and *The Creative Eye*

Additional Materials for "Spin-offs":

1. *In Other Words*, a beginning thesaurus by Scott-Foresman
2. Macmillan's *New Dictionary for Young Children*
3. *Childcraft*
4. *Fantastic Toys*

Concept	Recall	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
1. Each year an award is given to the children's book with the most outstanding illustrations. Note: The list of nominees is given out each October, and the winners are announced in January. You may wish to plan this unit for late fall. Read and share *Where the Wild Things Are*, by Maurice Sendak. You may tell the story of the Caldecott Medal or refer children to the *World Book* article or write a simplified version for your pupils to read for themselves.	1. What is the award called? 2. Tell the story of the "medal." 3. Make a list of the winners you have read. 4. Match a list of titles with the winning illustrators. 5. When did Maurice Sendak win the award? 6. List the criteria for the award. 7. What other kinds of awards are given for books each year? Spin-offs: Newbery Award Winners study	1. Classify the winners according to fantasy, true-life, animal stories, and so forth. 2. Design a mobile showing five or more winners. 3. Report to the class on the winners which are in your school library or neighborhood library.	1. Select three winners, and compare the styles of the illustrators. 2. Survey your class to see which students have read which winners. Make a graph showing the results. 3. Compare Maurice Sendak's "animals" to those of Brian Wildsmith. How are they alike? Different? 4. What special abilities would an illustrator need? Spin-off: Do a mini-unit on the art of illustration–survey books by Rackham, Neilsen, and others. See *All Mirrors Are Magic Mirrors* for reference and background.	1. Select one of your favorite stories, and do an original illustration in the style of your favorite illustrator. 2. Invent a "Caldecott" game board with lucky cards, spinners, and so forth. 3. Select a section from *Wild Things*, and do an original "monster" illustration. 4. Predict a winner from this year's recommended list. Justify your selection. 5. How would you go about illustrating a book?	1. Why do you think Sendak's book won the award in 1963? 2. Debate the merits of the proposed winners for this year. 3. Recommend to your group the book you think should win. 4. Do you think it is a good idea to give this kind of award each year? Why or why not? 5. What kind of people do you think should be on the judging panel? Would you like to select the winners? Why? Why not? 6. Discuss this idea: "All books should have illustrations."

Concept	Recall	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
2. Maurice Sendak is one of the most popular writers and illustrators of children's books. Note: You may wish to read some of the biographical materials to the pupils or rewrite them for their level. Encourage children to read as many of the books in the kit as possible.	1. List the books he has written *and* illustrated that you have read. 2. List the books he has illustrated *only*. 3. Locate the special reference books in the library that tell about authors. 4. Research about his life. 5. Locate his books in your library. 6. Which songs do you know in *Lullabies and Night Songs?*	1. Pretend you are interviewing Maurice Sendak. Make up five questions you would like to ask him. 2. Make a timeline showing when he wrote and/or illustrated his books. 3. Report to the class about his life and work. Spin-offs: 1. Write personal or class letters to Maurice Sendak or another favorite author/illustrator. 2. Do a career unit on authors, illustrators, editors, publishers, bookbinders, and bookstore owners. Invite speakers, and so forth.	1. Select two of his books that you like best, and compare them. 2. Make up a book jacket for your favorite Sendak book. Include the section on the author. 3. If you saw "Really Rosie" on TV, how was it the same as the book? How was it different? 4. Compare Max's adventures to those of Christopher Robin. Who has the most fun? Why?	1. Select one of your favorite Sendak books and recreate it as a play, a pantomime, or a puppet show. 2. Write a review of one of his books that would make others in your class eager to read it. 3. Take a familiar fairy tale, and create original illustrations in "cartoon" style. 4. Listen to some "mood" music, and select a piece that best goes with *Where The Wild Things Are.* Spin-off: Listen to selections from the records listed. Compose something original for a Sendak book.	1. Discuss this subject: "Maurice Sendak's books will still be popular 100 years from now." 2. Select one book you think is his best, and tell why. 3. If you do *not* care for his work, tell why. 4. What experiences in his life have influenced his books and illustrations? 5. How would you feel about being an author or illustrator?

Concept	Recall	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
3. "Fantasy" and "make-believe" are important qualities of Sendak's books. Note: See *Curriculum Guide for Teaching Gifted Children Literature in Grades One Through Three* for excellent ways to develop concepts in literature.	1. Which of his books have characters who "dream" their adventures? 2. Which books have make-believe characters? 3. Identify these characters with the list of books. 4. Listen to a tape of *Wild Things.* Which parts are make-believe or fantasy? Which parts are real-life? 5. How did Maurice Sendak get the ideas for his books?	1. Keep a diary/record of some of your dreams (sleeping or awake). 2. Paint a picture of a "make-believe" land or character or animal. 3. Make a diorama of your favorite Sendak "fantasy." 4. List descriptive or picture words which help you "see" what Sendak is saying. 5. Make a list of some other "fantasy" books you have read or seen in your library. Spin-off: (Related to No. 4) Use *In Other Words* for increasing "colorful" vocabularies.	1. Compare a Sendak fantasy to one of your favorite fairy tales. 2. Survey your class to see how many students prefer "make-believe" stories. Make a graph to show results.	1. Imagine you are Max and you went back to "where the wild things are." What would you take to the monsters? 2. Write a poem about an imaginary place or time. 3. Present a TV or radio show about some "monsters" that may really exist–"Loch Ness," "Big Foot," "Abominable Snowman." 4. Create your own imaginary story, play, cartoon strip. 5. Read *Fantastic Toys.* Design your own new toys.	1. Why do we enjoy fantasy and make-believe stories? 2. Is "day-dreaming" always a waste of time? 3. What kinds of things help you to be more "creative" or imaginative?

The following materials are also recommended for use in the unit on Maurice Sendak:

1. Sendak, Maurice. *Seven Little Monsters.* New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1977.
2. Sendak, Maurice, and Matthew Margolis. *Some Swell Pup.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc., 1976.
3. The television production "Really Rosie" (For rental information contact Weston Woods Company, Weston Woods, CT 06880.)
4. *Higglety, Pigglety, Pop!* recording narrated by Tammy Grimes (Caedmon Records)

Suggested Literature/Language Arts Curriculum for Mentally Gifted Minors

Grade level					
Kindergarten–one	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six
	Bill Martin series	*Charlotte's Web*	*Sounder*	*The Cay* and other works by Theodore Taylor →	Biographies
	Brian Wildsmith collection	Myths and legends	*Where the Readers Are*	Science fiction →	Men and women of greatness
	Beatrix Potter →	*Winnie the Pooh*	Greek heroes	Fantasy →	Scott O'Dell collection
	Fairy tales	Thematic reading	Greek myths	*Jonathan Livingston Seagull* →	*All Creatures Great and Small*
	Myths, legends, and folklore	*Releasing Children to Literature*	Typing →	Organization and reporting skills →	*Unsolved Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes*
	In Other Words: A Beginning Thesaurus	Laura Ingalls Wilder	*In Other Words: A Junior Thesaurus* →	Children's classics →	*The Phanthom Tollbooth*
	Leo Lionni →	American folklore	Biographies	U.S. history through fiction	American biographies
	Nursery rhymes and other literary treats →		Newbery Medal winners	*Poetry by and for Kids* →	
	Chinese literature →			*A Wrinkle in Time* →	

NOTE: Arrows indicate additional levels at which materials could be used.

SOURCE: Capistrano Unified School District

Suggested Teaching Materials

Books:

Hopkins, Lee B. *Books Are by People: Interviews with 104 Authors and Illustrators of Books for Young Children.* New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1969.

(Interviews with outstanding, contemporary authors of children's literature)

Purdy, Susan. *Books for You to Make.* Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1973.

(An excellent book on how to help children bind and cover their own books)

Reasoner, Charles F. *Releasing Children to Literature.* New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1976.

(An excellent source of exciting and creative ideas for teachers)

Reasoner, Charles F. *Where the Readers Are.* New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1972.

(An excellent source of exciting and creative ideas for teachers)

Wintle, Justin, and Emma Fisher. *The Pied Pipers.* New York: Two Continents Publishing Group, Inc., 1975.

(Interviews with authors of children's literature)

World Book Encyclopedia (Revised edition). Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1977.

(Contains an excellent section on children's literature)

Filmstrips:

Heroes of the Greek Myths. New Rochelle, N.Y.: Spoken Arts, n.d.

Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece. Mahwah, N.J.: Troll Associates, n.d.

Periodical:

Cricket Magazine. LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court Publishing Company.

Miscellaneous materials:

Newbery Activity Program. Portland, Oreg.: Sunburst Press, n.d.

(Task cards dealing with Newbery Medal winners)

Poetry by and for Kids. Chicago: Society for Visual Education, Inc., n.d. (Multimedia materials for enrichment activities)

Unsolved Mysteries. Chicago: Society for Visual Education, Inc., n.d. (Multimedia materials for enrichment activities)

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